United States Department of Agriculture
NRCS Natural Resources Conservation Service
Plant Fact Sheet

Black Grama

Bouteloua eriopoda (Torr.)

plant symbol = BOER4

Contributed by:
USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service
Tucson Plant Materials Center

Alternate Names
woollyfoot grama
hairyfoot
navajita negra
crowfoot grama

Key Web Sites
Extensive information about this species is linked to the PLANTS web site. To access this information, go to the PLANTS web site, select this plant, and utilize the links at the bottom of the Plants Profile for this species.

Uses
Erosion control: Black grama may form a weak sod by rooting at the nodes of the stems. This sod forming characteristic makes an excellent species to prevent soil erosion. It is a very drought tolerant grass that may increase on disturbed sites under reasonably good conditions.

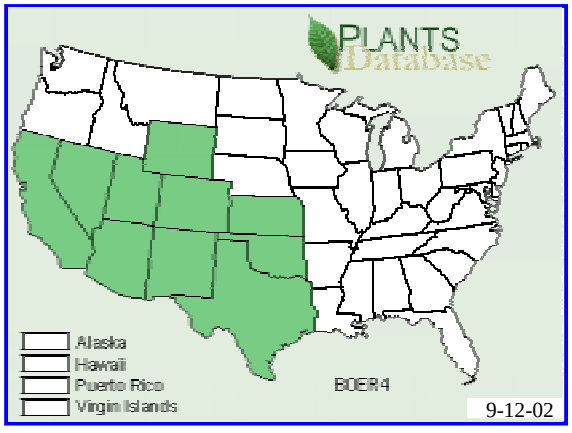
Livestock and Wildlife: Black grama provides good palatability and feeding value to all classes of livestock and wildlife. The forage for black grama maintains high protein even when dormant. Its ability to provide quality year-round forage make it very desirable. It may provide some cover for small animals.

Status
Black grama is a native species. Please consult the PLANTS Web site and your State Department of Natural Resources for this plant's current status (e.g. threatened or endangered species, state noxious status, and wetland indicator values).

Description
Bouteloua eriopoda (Torr.) is a native warm season perennial grass. It grows from 10 to 28 inches (25 to 71 cm), depending upon grazing strategy. Black grama grows from a hard base that becomes stoloniferous at the lower nodes. With limited grazing it forms uneven stands of large tufts. In some areas it is sod forming and may grow in almost pure stands. On sites that are extremely dry black grama exhibits the characteristics of a non sodforming bunch grass.

Adaptation
Black grama is a major grass of arid and semiarid grasslands in New Mexico, Arizona and Texas. It is distributed throughout desert grasslands on dry, rocky hills, uplands and grasslands and is frequently found on sandy dunes. It does poorly and is short lived when planted in heavy soils. Black grama has excellent drought tolerance.

Known Distribution



Establishment
Black grama is a warm season grass and therefore should be planted after soil temperatures reach approximately 50^0 F (10^0 C). The optimum time for planting is late July to early August.
Black grama has approximately 1.3 million seed per pound (0.46 kg). It is recommended that black grama be seeded at 0.5 to 1 lb. PLS*/acre (0.6 to 1.1 kg/hectare).

Management
Well established stands of black grama will last indefinitely if well managed and maintained. Forage production and vigor may be improved with supplemental fertilization, but is not necessary in critical area seedings.

Black grama is very susceptible to overgrazing. Research has shown that black grama has low resistance to summer grazing, however it withstands winter grazing fairly well. It has higher protein concentration than other desert grasses in winter.

Pests and Potential Problems
Seed production of black grama is seriously effected by insect infestations. One hundred and thirty-six species of insects were collected from various range and irrigated black grama crops. Seed yields of black grama can be significantly increased by insect control. Insects may be controlled by spraying with Acephate and/or Methomyl at weekly intervals, begun shortly before the grass begins to bloom.

Cultivars, Improved, and Selected Materials (and area of origin)
'Sonora' is a cultivar of black grama released in 1965 by the USDA-NRCS Arizona Plant Materials Center in cooperation with the Agricultural Research Service and the Agricultural Experiment Station of Arizona State University. 'Sonora originates from 12 selections vegetatively established in a synthetic crossing. 'Sonora' is no longer in production.

'Nogal' is a cultivar of black grama released in 1971 by the USDA-NRCS New Mexico Plant Materials Center and the New Mexico State University Agricultural Science Center at Los Lunas. The original seed was collected from a native stand in Socorro County New Mexico. Breeder seed is maintained by the USDA-NRCS New Mexico Plant Materials Center. Seed may be obtained through the New Mexico Crop Improvement Association.

Control
Please contact your local agricultural extension specialist or county weed specialist to learn what works best in your area and how to use it safely. Always read label and safety instructions for each control method. Trade names and control measures appear in this document only to provide specific information. USDA, NRCS does not guarantee or warranty the products and control methods named, and other products may be equally effective.

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*PLS=% purity X % germination